

REMARKS

Claims 2-10, 17-23 and 26-31 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 2-10 are amended. No new matter is added. Claim 1 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116(b)(1) because the amendments place the application in condition for allowance by rewriting allowable dependent claims in independent form. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

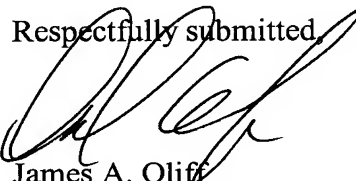
Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 17-23 and 26-31, and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 5 and 7. By this Amendment, claims 5 and 7 are rewritten in independent form. Therefore, claims 5 and 7, and the claims depending therefrom, should be allowable.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 6, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 4,982,486 to Otagawa et al. (Otagawa) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,260,395 to Webster; and rejects claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Otagawa in view of Webster, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,739,599 to Uchimura et al. (Uchimura). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

By this Amendment, claim 1 is canceled, and claims 2, 4, 6 and 8-10 are amended to depend from allowable claim 5. Therefore, claims 2-4, 6 and 8-10 are allowable at least for their dependence on claim 5, as well as for the additional features they recite. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2-10, 17-23 and 26-31 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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